



**File Code:** 1950  
**Date:** July 16, 2019

Dear Interested Party,

The Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District has continued to develop a proposal for the Mad Rabbit trails system. Ideas brought forth during roundtable discussions (winter 2018-2019) have been considered, along with other information, resulting in the current preliminary proposed action. At this time, the Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District seeks any new information related to this preliminary proposed action.

The original purpose and need for the project was to provide trail-based recreation opportunities, as well as to protect forest resources by reducing user-created trails. User-created ("non-system") trails are not engineered, do not meet Forest Service standards, and sometimes result in adverse resource and social impacts. Over the past year, the planning and public input processes have established more broadly the importance of conservation of natural resources and consideration of social concerns.

The attached preliminary proposed action includes approximately 50 miles of new trails, associated trailhead improvements, and additional management actions that would provide opportunities for a variety of users, both in terms of skill levels and types of use. Several trails identified in the Steamboat Trails Alliance proposal, and other ideas that serve diverse users, have been carried forward, resulting in opportunities for biking, hiking, wildlife viewing, and equestrian uses. A number of the proposed trails would occur along the Highway (Hwy) 40 corridor, creating both short and longer trail opportunities for varying abilities and uses, with connections to the Buffalo Pass area.

In order to protect resources and improve wildlife habitat, approximately 20 miles of user-created routes, mostly in the vicinity of Rocky Peak and Strawberry Park Hot Springs, would be rehabilitated to a natural state. Limiting further adverse impacts to this area, which already has appreciable traffic on county roads, was a topic of consensus during the roundtable discussions. Limiting trail development in this area would be consistent with the existing management area direction in the Routt Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), and support previous and current actions aimed at conserving wildlife and associated habitat in the area (e.g., wildlife habitat improvements as a part of the Steamboat Front project).

Suggestions for a high density trail system between the West Rabbit Ears Summit and Ferndale are not included in the proposal because it would not be fully consistent with the LRMP, Forest Service trail standards, and retention of the roadless character of the area.

The Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District seeks any new information related to this preliminary proposed action. Input is most helpful if received before August 15, 2019.



The preliminary proposed action can be seen at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50917>

Please submit your input via Email: [comments-rm-medicine-bow-routt-hahns-peak-bears-ears@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-rm-medicine-bow-routt-hahns-peak-bears-ears@fs.fed.us) with "Mad Rabbit Trails Project" in the subject line, or

Postal mail:

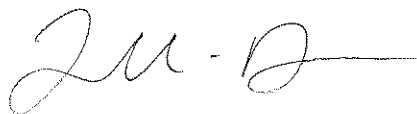
Hahns Peak-Bears Ears Ranger District  
Attn: Mad Rabbit Trails Project  
925 Weiss Drive  
Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

For this project, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) are being conducted concurrently. In order to better involve the public in the NHPA process, NEPA scoping letters and public legal notices which invite public comment as a part of the NEPA process also serve to notify and invite public comment on the proposal as stipulated by NHPA.

A draft environmental assessment (EA) for the Mad Rabbit Trails Project is anticipated to be released in the early spring of 2020. The iteration of the proposed action will be presented in that document. If you have questions on the proposal, please contact the project lead or district ranger at (970) 870-2299.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tara Umphries', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

TARA UMPHRIES  
District Ranger